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ABSTRACT

This report describes and analyzes the status of blacks in American society since the eve of World War II. It concludes that the current state of black-white relations is the result of the negative attitudes that whites hold towards blacks and the disadvantaged conditions under which many blacks live. The following summary findings are reported: (1) the well-being of both blacks and whites has advanced over the past 50 years by all aggregate statistical measures; (2) blacks remain substantially behind whites by almost all the same indicators; (3) the economic status of blacks relative to whites has deteriorated since the early 1970s; (4) the political, educational, health, and cultural status of blacks showed gains from the 1940s through the 1960s and some indicators continued to improve after the early 1970s; (5) some blacks have increased their socioeconomic status but a large minority remain disadvantaged; (6) political and social activism led to sweeping changes in the legal status of blacks; (7) resistance to social change in race relations continues; and (8) broad economic changes have significantly affected opportunities for all Americans. Policy recommendations are suggested in the following areas: (1) provision of education, health care, and other services; (2) facilitation of economic growth and full employment; (3) reduction of discrimination and involuntary segregation; and (4) development and reform of welfare programs. Statistical data are included on 70 tables and 50 graphs. Each of the 10 chapters includes a list of references. The following material is appended: (1) notes on methodology, definitions, and suggestions for further research; (2) biographical sketches of the members of the research group; and (3) a list of the committee's activities in compiling the report. (FMW)